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C O N F I D E N T I A L HANOI 000367

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON BLOC 8406 DETAINEES ARRESTED LAST FALL

Classified By: PolCouns Brian Aggeler. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) The Ministry of Public Security (MPS) has provided additional information about thirteen political dissidents arrested since September 2008. The update comes in response to a joint letter to VFM Pham Binh Minh from the Ambassador, the Group of Four (Canada, New Zealand, Norway and Switzerland) and the European Union, as well as a separate appeal from the Australians. According to the MPS, two of the thirteen were convicted of violating Vietnam's catch-all national security provision (Article 88) and sentenced to jail time, six have remained in detention for more than seven months awaiting formal charges, and four have been released. One additional individual, Vu Hung, is still in detention although the investigation into him was recently terminated. While all thirteen have been connected in some way with the Bloc 8406 political movement, the six individuals who remain in detention are the most well known and prominent.

¶2. (C) Vu Hung's status remains something of a mystery. Hung has been the subject of appeals from Amnesty International and International PEN Writers in Prison Committee, as well as a formal expression of concern from the Embassy. The MPS denied a request for the DCM to meet with Hung on the grounds that he was still under investigation. On April 16, Poloff met with dissident author Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, who has close contacts with Vu Hung's wife, and asked about his situation. Thuy said that Hung's wife still has not heard from him or been allowed to see him but that Hung's father was recently contacted by MPS and asked to sign a form stating that if released Hung won't break the law again. MPS also told Hung's father that he is in good health. Thuy said that Hung's family took this as a sign of his impending release.

¶3. (U) Below is Post's Unofficial Translation of the Ministry of Public Security's response to the joint letter:

Nguyen Xuan Nghia, born in 1949 in Kien An, Hai Phong. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 11 September 2008 by the Investigation Police of Ministry of Public Security (MPS) (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Current health status: normal. Currently detained in accordance with the law.

Pham Van Troi, born in 1972 in Hanoi. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 11 Sept 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Current health status: normal. Currently detained in accordance with the law.

Nguyen Van Tuc, born in 1964, permanent resident in Dong Hung, Thai Binh Province. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 11 September 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Current health status: normal. Currently detained in accordance with the law.

Ngo Quynh, born in 1984, permanent resident in Bac Giang Province. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 30 September 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Current health status: normal. Currently detained in accordance with the law.

Tran Duc Thach, born in 1952 in Nghe An Province, permanent resident in Ha Dong, Hanoi. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 14 Sept 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Current health status: normal. Currently detained in accordance with the law.

Vu Hung (full name Vu Van Hung), born in 1966 in Kim Bang, Ha Nam Province, permanent resident in Ha Dong, Hanoi. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 19 Sept 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). At present the investigation has been terminated. The Hanoi Police had requested exempting the criminal responsibility for Hung and terminating the investigation on the case.

Pham Thanh Nghiem, born in 1977 in Ngo Quyen, Hai Phong, permanent resident in Hai Phong. On 18 September 2008, the Hai Phong Police arrested red-handed Pham Thanh Nghiem for breaching the Article 88 of the Criminal Code. Current health status: normal. Currently detained in accordance with the law.

Nguyen Kim Nhan, born in 1949 in Nghe An Province, permanent resident in Bac Giang Province. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 24 Sept 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Nguyen Kim Nhan has been released to her locality. Health status: normal.

Nguyen Van Tinh, born in 1942 in Hai Phong. Detained, arrested and residence searched on 24 Sept 2008 by the Investigation Police of MPS (according to Art 88 of the Criminal Code). Has been released. Health status: normal.

Nguyen Thi Cam Hong, born in 1946, permanent resident in Long An Province. Detained and put under detention on 15 Sept 2008 by Hanoi Police according to the arrest warrant by Long An Police dated 27 August 2008. On 27 February 2009, at a first instance trial by Long An People's Court, Hong was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for creating public disorder and abusing democratic freedom rights against the interests of the State and its citizens. Health status: normal.

Duong Van Nam, born in 1970 in Tien Hung, Luc Nam, Bac Giang. Nam is currently living in Bac Giang. Health status: normal.

Le Thanh Tung (aka Le Ai Quoc), born in 1968, permanent resident in Soc Son, Hanoi. Currently living in Bac Giang. Health status: normal.

Ho Thi Bich Khuong, born in 1973 in Nghe An Province. In May 2005, Ho Thi Bich Khuong was arrested and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment by Ba Dinh People's Court for breaching the article 245 of the Criminal Code on creating public disorder. On 26 April 2007, Ho Thi Bich Khuong was arrested red-handed by the Nghe An Police for breaching article 258 of the Criminal Code and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment by the Nghe An People's Court. Health status: normal.

15. End Unofficial Translation.

MICHALAK